

24 October 2014

The Secretary to the Code Committee
The Takeover Panel
10 Paternoster Square
London
EC4M 7DY

Email: supportgroup@thetakeoverpanel.org.uk

Dear Code Committee of the Takeover Panel,

Re: The Takeover Panel: Post-offer undertakings and intention statements

The UK has been a world-leader in medicines research and development, but recent closures and restructuring put this position under threat. Drug discovery is changing everywhere: large pharma businesses are consolidating and downsizing, with much of early-stage research coming from an innovation ecosystem of academia and SMEs. The UK can stay at the cutting edge and reap the economic rewards if we act now, while the sector remains strong, to support the transition to the new drug discovery model.

The Society monitored the progress of Pfizer's recent bid to take-over AstraZeneca. We issued a statement which called for the interests of the science community to be taken into consideration.¹

We do not wish to comment on the detail of the Pfizer takeover bid. However, we do want to urge the Panel to ensure there is greater clarity over what will be binding and what is voluntary. Without clear guidance it is difficult for the widest range of interested parties to take a view of the balance of benefit in a takeover. We also note the importance of Directors' future responsibility beyond the first year after a takeover and in what circumstances, if any, a company could withdraw from a long term commitment where the wider business interest require a change.

The Society of Biology is a single unified voice, representing a diverse membership of individuals, learned societies and other organisations. We are committed to ensuring that we provide Government and other policy makers - including funders of biological education and research – with a distinct point of access to authoritative, independent, and evidence-based opinion, representative of the widest range of bioscience disciplines.

The Society represents a body of over 15 000 individual members and over 90 Member Organisations all working within the life sciences. A number of our members work in the pharmaceutical industry and our affiliated Member Organisations include a number of pharmaceutical companies.

Yours sincerely,

¹ <https://www.societyofbiology.org/news/news-archive/14-news/880-pharma-statement>



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